

That They May Know That I Am the LORD Exodus 7:5-11:10

Who is your God? That is the most important question you will ever answer. Everyone worships. Whom are you worshipping?

The book of Exodus is a story that shows us who the real God is.

What's Up with the Plagues?

In this section of Exodus, we are looking at the “plagues.” Now, I suppose the modern person may look at these plagues and say, “Are you kidding me? What’s up with these bizarre scenes of frogs, gnats, blood, etc.? Is God trying to be a jerk? Is he trying to annoy the Egyptians? This is silly and hard to believe.” I can sympathize with you, my friend. It is strange and severe.

But you must understand that there is something bigger going on with the ten plagues. God is judging not just judging the Egyptians; he is executing his just judgment on the *gods* of the Egyptians.

In Exodus **12:12**, God says that he is going to perform the last sign, the death of the firstborn and in so doing he is executing “**judgment on all the gods of Egypt.**”

This is also repeated in Numbers “**On their gods also the LORD executed judgments**” (33:4b).

The plagues fall on all the areas of life that were supposed to have been protected by Egypt’s gods. James Boyce says:

There were about eighty major deities in Egypt, all clustered about three great natural forces of Egyptian life: the Nile River, the land, and the sky.... The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile. The next four were against the land gods. The final four plagues were against the gods of the sky, culminating the death of the firstborn (Ryken, 216).

God has put his glory on display by judging these false gods.

No Other Gods

God wants everyone to know that He is God, and there is no other. This theme echoes throughout the Bible.

Later in Exodus the first commandment says, “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:3). Luther said that there is only really

one commandment, the first, because if you keep it, you'll keep the others! Again, "who is your God?" is the most important question.

In Deuteronomy:

[34] Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [35] To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.

(Deuteronomy 4:34-35)

Later in Joshua, we see that Israel also worshiped the gods of Egypt previously and are told by their leader worship the real God:

[14] "Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

(Joshua 24:14)

In Isaiah, God says:

"I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other."

Isaiah 40:8

We've already mentioned that Jesus refers to himself as "I am" (eg., John 8:58). He is the second person of the Triune God. And this is what Jesus said about eternal life:

"And this is eternal life, that you know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

John 17:3

There is one God and you need to embrace him, through Jesus Christ. Paul says conversion is about turning from idols to the living God:

[9] you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

(1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

Here We Go: Lots of Verses

In 7:5-11:10, we see this overarching message, "that they may know that I am the LORD." It appears throughout Exodus, especially in these five chapters.

In verses 7:8-13, Moses and Aaron perform an initial sign, or what you might call a "preview of the plagues." There is a pattern that is set forth, showing some common emphases in the ten plagues. That pattern includes four parts (Ryken, 203) :

- 1.The Obedience of Moses and Aaron
- 2.God's superior power over Egypt's gods
- 3.Satan's counterfeits
- 4.The perpetual hardening of Pharaoh's heart

Let's first take a look at this one dominant theme, and then look at these other four reoccurring ideas that are previewed in 7:8-13.

#1: ONE DOMINANT THEME

"That They May Know That I AM the LORD" (7:5-11:10)

We have alluded to this theme already in the book.

- God tells Israel that he is going to redeem them and give them a land, and make them his people so that, "you shall know that I am the LORD your God" (6:7);
- God also says he is going to lay his hand of judgment on the Egyptians for the same reason, "The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (7:5).

God's judgment is always mingled with mercy. Don't forget that.

Many people may protest against God's judgment and wrath. This shouldn't surprise us. Whenever people protest against God's judgment, it is a sign that they've **minimized their sin** and God's **blazing holiness**. "Sin is cosmic treason" (Sproul).

They have also minimized **God's sovereignty**. God is totally free to do as he pleases. In fact, Paul draws on Exodus in **Romans 9** quoting God's revelation "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (15).

Remember also that **Israel was not better than the Egyptians**. They did not merit salvation. They were saved the same way we are saved, **"by grace through faith."** They saw the signs and believed. Egypt (at least most of them it seems) did not believe.

See this Theme

There are a number of issues one could study when it comes to the plagues, but I don't want you to miss the forest for the trees. Notice the chart that illustrates God's passion to be known and worshiped. Notice all the purposes clauses (i.e., "that") which shows us this God-centered purpose.

Plague	Reference
1. Nile	[17] Thus says the LORD, “By this <i>you shall know that I am the LORD</i> : behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. (Exodus 7:17, my emphasis)
2. Frogs	[10] And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, <i>so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God</i> . (Exodus 8:10, my emphasis)
3. Gnats	Not mentioned
4. Flies	[22] But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, <i>that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth</i> . (Exodus 8:22, emphasis added)
5. Livestock	Not mentioned
6. Boils	Not mentioned
7. Hail	[14] For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, <i>so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth....</i> [16] But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, <i>so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth....</i> [29] Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, <i>so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's</i> . (Exodus 9:14, 16, 29, emphasis added)
8. Locusts	[2] and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, <i>that you may know that I am the LORD</i> .” (Exodus 10:2, emphasis added)
9. Darkness	Not mentioned
10. Final Plague Threatened	[9] Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, <i>that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt</i> . (Ex. 11:9, emphasis added)

“I AM the LORD” beyond the plagues in Exodus:

[4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

(Ex.14:4)

[18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

(Ex 14:18)

[12] “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

(Ex.16:12)

[46] And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

(Ex. 29:46)

We see here God’s great purpose: the glory of his great name.

Jonathan Edwards says this *the end for which God created the world*. And that our greatest happiness will come when we pursue his glory, delight in his glory, rejoice in his glory.

#2: FOUR REOCCURRING EMPHASES (7:8-12)

Let me show you the four more reoccurring emphases that appear in this episode, and then throughout the plagues. This is sort of like a Western, in which the good guys and bad guys square off for a bit of a scuffle, only to reserve the real battle for later. This is sort of the bar scene in **Tombstone**, when Doc Holiday twirls his little cup, but later the shootout will happen. And it will be utter domination.

Emphasis #1: Obedience (7:8-10)

First Moses and Aaron are told to take the **staff**. It signifies God is the one who is working signs. It continues throughout Israel’s journey as a sign of God’s presence and power.

Then notice, “they did just as the LORD commanded” (10). This statement shows us growth in Moses’ life. Before, Moses wanted to argue and make excuses when God commissioned him. But now it says, “they did just as the LORD commanded.” This should be everyone’s response to God’s Word, *immediate, instinctive, loving obedience*.

Emphasis #2: God’s Superior Power over Egypt’s Gods (7:8-12)

This initial sign has to do with a **snake**. The word used here is the word for large, deadly, venomous snakes. It probably refers to a *cobra*.

Again, God is taking on the gods of Egypt, not just Pharaoh.

Snakes as Gods

Snakes captivated the Egyptians. Pharaoh wore one on his head, as a symbol of his authority. He was to be feared, like snakes were feared. They were so awe-struck by snakes that it led them to serpent worship. The Egyptians reportedly built a temple in honor of the snake goddess **Wadjet**, who was represented by a cobra (Ryken, 206).

So here is the pattern: God taking on the gods of Egypt. The only true and living God is going to perform signs that are so astonishing that there is no doubt that he is superior. So it's **not just going to be a frog or two**, or a few bugs, a little red water, a little hailstorm, or a few people with boils, or a cloudy day. No, the plagues are horrific signs of God's judgment and sovereign power. God is making sure people know that He is doing it, and that he alone is God.

Emphasis 3: Counterfeit Signs (11-12)

11-12a: The text mentions three groups who try to respond to this sign with their own miracle: wise men, sorcerers and magicians. The word translated "**magician**" is like from the Egyptian title for a **priest**. They acted in the service of Egypt's "gods." There are numerous Egyptian texts that speak of extraordinary acts performed by these priests.

What exactly does "**secret arts**" mean? There are a few options. Some think they were like illusionists, who could put on a magic show. Others think they were snake charmers. There is of course a long history of snake charming along the Nile. Some report that these tricks are still done today, in which an Egyptian cobra is paralyzed and made to look like a cane.

But I believe that the best way to understand their work is as a wonder performed by the power of Satan. Egypt is clearly in touch with dark power.

We too are in a spiritual war. Paul says:

[12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
(**Ephesians 6:12**)

Therefore, we must be alert, and rely upon the Lord's strength as you encounter evil influence. Exodus shows us that the evil one may have real influence, it is no match for God.

Here in Exodus, we see that Satan is a counterfeiter. Paul says concerning “the lawless one” whom “Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth” that the lawless one’s activity is the activity of Satan, which involves “**false signs and wonders**” (2 Thess. 2:8-9).

12b: After the counter sign done by Pharaoh’s court, Aaron staff swallowed up their staffs! This was a clear sign that God was superior. God wasn’t doing a magic trick; he was performing a miracle.

Let me point out one more preview in the preview to the plagues. Notice this phrase, “**swallowed up.**” This same word is used later in **Exodus 15:12** used to describe the drowning of the Egyptians in the sea.

Emphasis 4: Perpetual Hardening of Pharaoh’s Heart (13)

Pharaoh remained insensitive. He was not interested in listening to God. He had no feeling for God. He had a heavy, cold, hard heart.

God predicted this would happen (7:3-4).

Pharaoh stands as a **warning** to everyone. Do not harden your heart to God. He saw some awesome signs and wonders and still refused to listen. Some think they would believe if they saw more miracles.

Pharaoh’s issue is not with evidence; it is with his stubborn heart.

Jesus has given us the final sign, the *empty tomb*. There is plenty enough evidence for a person to believe. The Israelites saw the same thing and believed. That passage in 2 Thessalonians goes on to say that those who are under the influence of the evil one will perish because “they refuse to love the truth and so be saved” (10). That’s exactly what Pharaoh does here; he refuses to love the truth and be saved.

Oh, how I pray you do not harden your heart.

These Four Emphases in the 10 Plagues:

Obedience, God’s Superior Power, Counterfeits, Hardening

Let me show you some more charts to show these four emphases. I’ll comment briefly on each plague. I will show them to you in three cycle of three because that seems to be the arrangement. Plague three, six and nine are similar in their brevity and style.

I want to comment specifically on the matter of God’s judgment on *Egypt’s gods* because he is making **the dominant point** that He alone

is God. And this point has great application for us, as we think the temptation to bow to our own idols.

The plagues should serve not only as a warning to those who refuse to believe the gospel, but *for believers who are tempted to love, serve, and trust anything except the living God.*

First Cycle of Plagues

Reoccurring Emphases	1. Nile to Blood	2. Frogs	3. Gnats
Obedience	7:20-21	8:5-6	8:16-17
God's Power Over Egypt's gods	7:21b	8:6b	8:17b
Counterfeits	7:22a	8:7	8:18 (unable to replicate)
Hardening of Heart	7:22b-23	8:15	8:19

1. The Nile (7:14-25)

- God's first display of superior power is appropriate: a miracle on the Nile River.
- The Nile as the lifeblood of Egypt. There is no Egypt without the Nile. It was responsible for: transportation, irrigation, water, food, and the setting of the calendar.
 - This type of catastrophe would be similar to cutting off all oil supplies, the stock market collapsing, drinking water being contaminated, and no of food the grocery store. It would be total chaos.
- Some don't think this was real blood. They claim it was red soil that washed into the Nile. But the biblical record says it is blood (Ps. 78:44; 105:29). Moses strikes it and it turns into blood. Further, the fish are dying. The spirit of this text is that this was no natural occurrence, but a supernatural miracle.
 - It is interesting that in Revelation 16:3-7, water is turned into blood in the great judgment.
- It is no surprise that the Egyptians worshiped the Nile, as their creator and sustainer. There were at least three deities associated

with the Nile: **Osiris, Nu, and Hapi** (Ryken, 220). God totally humiliates these gods when he turns it into blood.

22: The magicians counter the miracle. But the fact that the people were digging for water shows that while they repeated the sign, they could not cleanse the water from the Nile.

23: Pharaoh refuses to “take even this into his heart.”

Idolatry Question: To whom are you looking to provide for your needs? While you may have never heard of these **Egyptian river gods**, people are still tempted to trust in other things to **provide** for them, instead of God alone. Many place their final hope in the **stock market, economic growth, a new president, or something else**.

2. Frogs (8:1-15)

3-4: Notice how severe this is! Frogs are coming up into the house, bedroom, beds, into the ovens and kneading bowls, and on all the inhabitants of Egypt! **This is a humorous miracle when you think about it.** Frogs are not that scary or creepy but when you have them everywhere, then that is scary and creepy, not to mention annoying. **Imagine, mothers seeing frogs come out of their mixing bowl,** children having frogs leap out of their oatmeal, and the frogs even come into Pharaoh's court.

- Think also about the frog deities that God is opposing. One goddess named **Heqet**, was pictured with **head of a frog**, and sometimes the body. Apparently, this goddess was to control the frog population, and also assist women in childbirth. The frog was so sacred that the Egyptians could kill them.
- So the Nile and the frogs were symbols of fertility.
- Frogs are symbols of fertility and life for us today. Those of you who grew up around a body of water, like a lake, you know that when you hear frogs that means there is life there. **(When I was younger, we used to go “frog gigging.” Those of you from New York may have never heard of this. But we would “spork” frogs, take them home, clean them and eat the legs. We had to be careful not to gig a snake).** Where there were frogs, there was life. Egypt was powerful because this Nile River had life. Now, God says, “You like frogs, I’ll give you frogs.”
- **But you could not gig all of these frogs!**
- These deities are humiliated.

7: The magicians duplicate the act, but that actually makes things worse! They can do nothing to remove the frogs.

8, 15: Pharaoh offers some false repentance. *A false promise of faith and obedience will not bring salvation.*

12-13: Moses begins this ministry of intercession.

14: The land “stank” which is just what was said in **5:21** about the Hebrews. Now, Egypt has become a stench.

Idolatry Question: To whom do you look to for comfort in trials? Heqet was looked to because the Egyptians were looking for help in childbirth. In the ancient world, childbirth was even more dangerous and frightening than today. Surely, no one in here is looking to an amphibian, but are you looking to something to God for ultimate comfort in desperate times, in childbirth, in your health condition, or any other situation that you think is out of your control?

3. Gnats (8:16-19)

- Scholars have various ideas over what kind of insect this actually was. They could have been **lice or mosquitoes.** They are touching the people. It is translated “lice” in the KJV. Whatever they were, they were swarming everywhere in Egypt, affecting everyone.
- Which god was God striking in this plague? It is hard to pin point these in each plague, since they aren’t mentioned. Bu this plague could have been intended to humiliate the **earth-god, Geb.** This is drawn from God’s turning the dust into bugs. God is challenging their trust in the soil and the god of the ground.

18: Notice that the magicians are now not able to replicate the signs. Up to this point, they were unable to overpower the sign or reverse the effects. Not only could they not replicate it, they were probably covered with them as well! These magician/priests did not touch insects, and bathed religiously. This is humiliation.

19: The magicians are beginning to see who the real God is. This doesn’t mean they are converted, but this seems to be *a positive step.* But Pharaoh will not listen.

Idolatry Question: Do you trust a generic god of the earth or the God of the Bible? Egypt looked to the earth god, but whom do trust in, rely on for your daily bread and for order and sustaining power? Many people today believe in a “god” or “the man upstairs” or “the big man.” I remember in basketball practice, our coach would say,

“Root, go out there and pray. We want to make sure the big man is on our side.” Don’t put your faith in some generic force, the sky fairy, or grandfather in the sky – trust in the living God, the Triune God of the Bible.

Second Cycle of Plagues

Reoccurring Emphases	4. Flies	5. Livestock Dies	6. Boils
Obedience	8:20-24a (implied)	9:1-6a (implied)	9:8-10
God’s Power Over Egypt’s gods	8:24	9:6b-7a	9:11
Counterfeits	None	None	None (affected personally)
Hardening of Heart	8:32	9:7b	9:12

4. Flies (8:20-32)

We aren’t told when the gnats problem ended, or if it remained. But here we have more little creatures doing God’s bidding.

Again, we don’t know what kind of flies these were, but they were everywhere! (24).

Everyone hates flies, gnats, mosquitoes. But can you imagine this!

22-23: This is the first time when there is a distinction made between the effects of the plagues on Egypt and Israel. This is a picture of salvation and judgment. God’s people are protected from his wrath. Theologically, we know when we are in Christ, we will not face God’s wrath. We are hidden with Christ.

These plagues are what some call “**De-creation**,” a reversal of the created order. Instead of order being created out of chaos, as in creation, there is disorder created from order. The Egyptians believed Pharaoh had the power to maintain order in the cosmos, what they called the “**ma’at**.” But we know as believers, only one can create and sustain the cosmos, and that is our great God. Paul says in Colossians that Jesus holds our lives and the cosmos together – he is our sustainer.

Some who want to protest this section saying that these plagues are impossible, really have one question – **is there a god or not?** If he created the world, then surely he could do a “de-creation” as well.

- Despite the ruin and disorder, Pharaoh acts the same way, hardening his heart.
- Notice there is a new pattern; no counterfeits are produced.

What god was being targeted here? We can't know for sure, but it could be “**the god of the resurrection**” – **Kepher** – who was depicted as a beetle. Some argue that these flies were flying beetles, known as scarabs. Scarabs are found on monuments and other things in Egypt.

Idolatry Question: To whom are you looking to for eternal life?

Kepher can't raise the dead? A denomination can't raise the dead; a political party can't raise the dead. Only God can raise the dead. People are fascinated with eternal life in culture, we see traces in **Peter Pan, the Fountain of Youth** and more. But Jesus says, if you believe in him, though you die, you will live (John 11:25-26).

Another question, related to de-creation is, in whom are you trusting in for sustaining power? Look to the one who brings order out of chaos.

5. Livestock Die (9:1-7)

Can you imagine all these huge creatures lying everywhere? **I once hit a cow on the interstate in what was one of the scariest moments of my life!** They are huge creatures.

4-6: Notice, again there is a distinction made between God's people and the Egyptians (4). Nothing that belonged to Israel died.

- Egyptians had all kinds of sacred cows. Many of their gods were depicted as livestock. **Many worshiped a bull**, which they viewed as a fertility figure. At the temple in Memphis, there was a sacred place that kept a live bull that was said to be the **incarnation of the god Apis**. There were also goddesses that were symbols of love and beauty and motherhood, **Hathor, and Isis**.
- This may have been what led the Israelites to later worship a **golden calf** (Ex. 32).

Idolatry Question: Are you worshiping the god of beauty and sex?

Tim Keller says that the greater the good of a thing, the more like we are to turn it into an idol. Sex and beauty are wonderful gifts, but

they can be worshiped in place of our great God. When you make a god out of these things, they will never satisfy you. They will leave you longing for more.

6. Boils (9:8-12)

8: This act was done in the face of the magicians who apparently performed their miracles through this sort of act. It was customary for these “priests” to throw these ashes into the air as a sign of blessing (Ryken, 273). It may have also been a display of justice, since the soot may have come from the brick-making furnace.

9:9-10: You notice an increase in intensity. This sign is directly impacting the inhabitants.

11: Not only could the magicians not replicate the sign; they are affected personally.

The Egyptians looked to their false gods for healing. This included: **Amon Re, Thoth, Imhotep, and Sekhmet.** This plague was an attack on all the false gods that the Egyptians trusted in for healing. Medicine is a wonderful tool, but it is not God.

Idolatry Question: To whom do you trust in for the healing of your body? (Cite **James 5:16**). We think you should use medicine, but ultimately our healing is from God. And ultimately, we are all going to die, and you have only one hope for eternal, total healing – I AM.

Third Cycle of Plagues

Reoccurring Emphases	7. Hail	8. Locusts	9. Darkness
Obedience	9:13-23	10:3	10:21-22
God’s Power Over Egypt’s gods	9:24-26	10:4-6, 14-15	10:22b-23
Counterfeits	None	None	None
Hardening of Heart	9:34-35	10:1, 20	10:27-29

7. Hail (9:13-35)

14: Here we have the worst hailstorm in history. This plague is intense.

This plague and the next are very long accounts, and we get some additional commentary.

14-17: the Lord explains his purposes. They include: **(1)** to display his **uniqueness** (“none like me” -14); **(2)** to show **his power** (16a); **(3)** **for his name to be proclaimed** in all the earth (16b).

God’s purpose on the “earth” is also interesting. It was only by God’s mercy that he had not already destroyed Egypt. Paul quotes this verse in **Romans 9:17**, in explaining God’s sovereignty. (READ 9:16-18).

18: This is a serious storm! **How many of you have been afraid in a storm? Think of being in the worst storm in history!**

19-21: Notice something very different in this plague. Some of the people of Egypt respond to God’s Word. Is this “**conversion**?” Not sure. We know group one responded to God’s gracious word by faith, and group two did not.

Ryken says, “Even when he [God] was judging Pharaoh for his sins, God had a plan for Egypt’s salvation.” Of course, God’s saving plan for Egypt is sprinkled throughout the OT (**Jer. 46:26; Isaiah 19**), and then on the Day of Pentecost we read about how Egyptians were there on the day the church was born (**Acts 2:5-11**).

God loves the nations; Pharaoh and most of the Egyptians, refused to heed God’s Word. But this incident shows that perhaps some of them believed.

The problem was not with the “nation” but with their idolatry and their refusal to heed God’s Word.

22-26 – The storm hits and the people of Goshen are not touched.

27-35: Once again Pharaoh practices false repentance.

- It is worth noting here that just mouthing off religious words is not sufficient for salvation. We have noted that God hears the genuine prayer of repentance, and the cry for the Lord’s mercy. But he can see through false repentance.

What was wrong with his confession?

- He didn't confess his sin to God.
- He minimized his sin– he was minimizing his sin by saying “This time”
- He did not turn away from his sin. There is a difference in remorse and repentance. Repentance is a turning away from sin.

Beware of practicing false repentance.

What God was confronted? Who knows? They had plenty to choose from. They had gods over all the elements – atmosphere god, sky goddess, goddess of moisture, gods present in the earth and wind.

The Psalmist says, “Lightening and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding” (**Psalm 148:8**). There aren't a number of gods over different parts of creation, there is one God is our creator and redeemer.

Idolatry Question: Where do you go for refuge, shelter, and peace? Go to God alone.

8. Locusts (10:1-20)

The scene is getting darker and darker, and the music is changing to something akin to the music in the Gladiator film.

1: This sign starts off by commenting on the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart. Hereafter in the plagues it is usually the Lord who is referred to as hardening his heart.

2: God tells Moses that the plagues are not just for Egypt, but also for Israel, and for them to **tell their sons about their God**.

- The Exodus was the story of Israel. It was the story that shaped them as a people, and it was to be retold.
- We are part of that grand story that continued to the NT with the coming of Jesus. We are to keep telling this story.

5: This scene is horrific. This intense scene is pointing forward to the ultimate sign of judgment in the final plague.

6: Nothing like this was ever known in Egypt.

7: Pharaoh's servants are now even saying, “Let them go!”

8-11: It seems like Pharaoh is going to listen, but it's not the case. He responds with qualified obedience (10). He only is willing to send the men away, not the women and children. But that's not the plan. Moses tells him everyone will be going. Pharaoh sends them away in anger and pride (11).

12-16 – The locust come over the land and not a green thing remained – neither tree nor plant of the field.

17: Pharaoh is still **minimizing** his sin. He basically says, “Forgive me this one time.” He is not practicing biblical repentance. He fails to see nature of his sinful actions and the gravity of these plagues.

God continued to humiliate the Egyptian gods. This time it was an assault on the gods of the fields. Many Egyptians depended on **Min, the patron god of crops; Isis, the goddess of life** (who prepared flax for clothes); **Nepri, the god of grain; Anubis, the guardian of the fields; Senehem; the protector against pest.** These gods failed miserably.

Idolatry Question: Once again, the question is to whom do you look for daily provisions – for bread and clothes? Look to the living God.

9. Darkness (10:21-29)

Nothing says judgment like darkness and death. That's what sign nine and ten are about.

21: Notice it is a darkness that is to be “**felt**.” God intends for this warning to **immobilize** the Egyptians, to stun them.

22-23 – Few of us have probably ever been in true darkness. They can't even see each other! Travel in the ancient world was done in the day; it wasn't like modern day in which we travel at night because we have lights.

How many of you have ever been afraid in the dark? **I remember my first coon hunting experience...**

Three Days! Imagine this! Darkness for three days prefigures the death to come. Darkness is the realm of the dead. And the final plague will come at midnight.

24: Once again, Pharaoh offers a qualification to what the Lord asks. This time he says, “only let your flocks and herds remain.”

27-29: Pharaoh is sick of seeing Moses' face. Soon, he will not see it ever again.

Darkness would have been super terrifying to the Egyptians because they also worshiped the sun. Ryken says concerning the god **Amon-Re, their main sun god**, "Every morning the rising of the sun in the east reaffirmed the life-giving power of Amon-Re." The sunset represented death, but the sunrise offered them the hope of the resurrection. Moreover, **the Pharaoh was known as the son of Re, the incarnation of Amon-Re.** Amon-Re for most was the king of all Egypt's gods.

But Amon-Re, the biggest of all of Egypt's gods could not help them!

Idolatry question: Who is your Savior? Do you look to Jesus everyday and find your identity, salvation and hope? He alone was incarnate God! He crushed our greatest enemy, and to use the language of the preview to the plagues, swallowed up death, conquering sin and death, giving us eternal life. Paul said,

*Death is swallowed up in victory.
O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?
1 Cor. 15:54b-55, my emphasis*

The Tenth Plague Threatened (11:1-10)

Reoccurring Emphases	10. Final Plague Threatened
Obedience	11:1-4
God's Power Over Egypt's gods	11:5-9
Counterfeits	None
Hardening of Heart	11:10

10. The Final Plague Threatened

1-3: The Lord prepares Israel to go out of Egypt.

2-3: Israel is told to ask for silver and gold. This is the fulfillment of the account in Exodus 3:21-22. They are to simply ask for it. The Lord is fighting their battle for them. Moreover, Moses is “very great in the land of Egypt.” This too is a fulfillment of his call. God promised to be “with him.” And that’s what made him effective.

4-8: Pharaoh is warned of the final plague to come. Notice that in this plague there is no word about asking Pharaoh to “let them go.” There’s only a statement of what’s coming. This is showing us finality. It is too late for Pharaoh now. There is no further request for his cooperation.

5: Notice “firstborn.” Earlier, God referred to Israel as his firstborn (4:22) and indicated that Pharaoh will pay with his firstborn (4:22-23).

8: Moses is furious for some reason. We don’t know why, but one can guess that Pharaoh’s pride was angering him.

The worst of all the ten plagues are coming next: the death of the firstborn.

One Dominant Question: Who Is Your God?

In this section of Scripture, we meet the real God! This God is:

- **Almighty** – He rules over creation alone.
- **Sovereign** – His justice and his mercy are his choice.
- **Jealous** – He will not share his glory with another.
- **Just** – He will punish people according to their sins.
- **Merciful** – He will save all who cry out to him in humility and genuine repentance.

Mercy and justice are always mingled.

And the most important glorious, act of mercy and justice happened when God killed his Son. He passed over us and punished Jesus in our place.

- Jesus Christ, the righteous one was punished *in place of us*.
- He was crucified *instead of us*.
- He took God’s wrath *on behalf of us*.

Everyone will be judged.

- Either, Jesus took your judgment, or
- something worse than the plagues are coming your way, as you face the judgment.

For believers, we rejoice, because through Christ there is no condemnation. Jesus took our curse:

He experienced darkness. The darkness that happened at the cross. The darkness of the tomb. And by his death and resurrection, we who deserve death, have nothing but mercy forever.

Know Christ as the only Savior, or Fear Him as Judge. Do not harden your heart against him.